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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1307 (2000) of 13 July 2000, by which the Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka (UNMOP) until 15 January 2001. The present report covers developments since my most recent report on UNMOP of 10 October 2000 (S/2000/976).

2. UNMOP currently consists of 27 United Nations military observers (see annex) headed by a Chief Military Observer, Colonel Graeme Williams (New Zealand).

3. In accordance with its mandate, UNMOP continues to monitor the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula and of the neighbouring areas in Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia by conducting vehicle, foot and standing patrols. The Mission continues to hold regular meetings with the local authorities in order to strengthen liaison, reduce tension, improve safety and security and promote confidence between the parties. The Chief Military Observer maintains contact with the authorities in Zagreb and Belgrade in order to address issues arising from the implementation of resolution 1307 (2000). Cooperation between UNMOP and the multinational Stabilization Force (SFOR) is maintained through regular meetings.

II. Situation in the area of responsibility of the Mission

4. The area of responsibility of UNMOP and the designations of the demilitarized and United Nations-controlled zones remain as previously reported. Within this area, UNMOP continues to maintain its 24-hour presence at the team site on the Ostra peninsula, at Herceg Novi in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and at the headquarters at Cavtat and the team site at Gruda in Croatia.

Demilitarized zone

5. The situation in the demilitarized zone has not changed and remains calm and stable. In accordance with the security regime, police forces of the parties maintain control of the zone; these are, on the Croatian side, the Special Police and, on the Yugoslav side, the Montenegrin Border Police and Special Police. In general, both parties have respected the demilitarized zone during the reporting period.

6. An anti-aircraft weapon installed by the Montenegrin police at Debeli Brijeg on 23 September 2000 (see S/2000/976, para. 8) was removed on 11 October. On 17 December, the Yugoslav Army towed an artillery gun through the demilitarized zone. This violation was protested.

7. As reported previously, the United Nations military observers enjoy unrestricted freedom of movement on the Yugoslav side of the demilitarized zone. On the Croatian side, the authorities continue to require UNMOP to provide advance written notice

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before undertaking foot or vehicle patrols in the northern part of the zone.

United Nations-controlled zone

8. While calm and stable conditions prevailed during the reporting period, the long-standing violations of the security regime in the United Nations-controlled zone continued unchanged. Approximately 25 Croatian Special Police are located at 3 positions and approximately 10 Montenegrin Border Police are present at 2 positions inside that zone. The Croatian Special Police conduct foot and vehicle patrols throughout the part of the zone accessible to them.

9. The presence of manned checkpoints of Croatia and Montenegro for the purpose of operating a crossing regime at Cape Kobila is a continuing violation of the security regime in the zone. While vehicle traffic through Cape Kobila remains insignificant, both the Croatian and Montenegrin authorities continue to allow local residents into the United Nations-controlled zone for the purpose of crossing on foot into Montenegro and Croatia, respectively. In addition, the Croatian authorities continue to permit civilians, including local and foreign tourists, to enter the zone for fishing and for agricultural and recreational purposes. The waters of the United Nations-controlled zone continue to be violated frequently by fishing boats and recreational boats which enter from both the Croatian and Montenegrin sides.

10. The activities described above, which involve the unauthorized presence of civilians in the United Nations-controlled zone, while not constituting a security threat, demonstrate a disregard for the security regime which was freely agreed upon by the parties and which UNMOP is obliged to monitor.

III. Progress towards a negotiated settlement

11. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia have both repeatedly affirmed a willingness to resolve their dispute over Prevlaka through bilateral negotiations, pursuant to the Agreement on Normalization of Relations signed by them at Belgrade on 23 August 1996 (S/1996/706, annex). As reported previously, each Government has submitted a proposal for settling the dispute (see S/1998/533 and S/1998/632) and their negotiating teams have held four rounds of talks, the last at Belgrade on 9 March 1999. In April 2000, Croatia invited representatives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to attend a fifth round of talks in Croatia at a date to be determined. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia replied to that invitation by a letter dated 8 June 2000 (see S/2000/602). Despite a subsequent exchange of letters, as reported in my last report (see S/2000/976, para. 17), thus far the parties have not met to pursue their negotiations. It is evident from that correspondence that, at that time, the parties continued to adhere to their divergent views on the nature of the dispute and the way forward. During the reporting period, no official communications between the parties were made available to the United Nations.

12. On 17 November 2000, I met with President Stjepan Mesic and Foreign Minister Tonino Picula of Croatia and on 19 December with Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. During these meetings the question of Prevlaka was raised and both sides indicated their willingness to settle the issue through negotiations.

IV. Confidence-building measures

13. As will be recalled, pursuant to the Security Council's request in resolution 1252 (1999) of 15 July 1999, a package of recommendations and options for confidence-building was conveyed informally to the parties by the Secretariat in October 1999 (see S/1999/1051, para. 20). Subsequent contacts with the parties showed that the positions on the options package as a whole were far apart. Both favoured some of the options proposed by the Secretariat but rejected others, according to their overall divergent views on the dispute. During the reporting period, no new developments have taken place in this regard.

V. Financial aspects

14. Although an independent mission, UNMOP draws its administrative and budgetary support from the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH). By its resolution 54/273 of 15 June 2000, the General Assembly appropriated an amount of $150 million (gross) for the maintenance of UNMIBH for the 12-month period from 1 July 2000 to 30 June 2001.

15. Therefore, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNMOP beyond 15 January 2001, as recommended in paragraph 19 below, the costs of maintaining the Mission would be met from within the budget of UNMIBH.

VI. Observations

16. The overall situation in the United Nations-monitored zones has remained calm and the zones have been free of significant incidents. However, the parties have yet to take advantage of these conditions to move towards a political settlement of their dispute. Croatia's invitation in April 2000 to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to attend a fifth round of negotiations, together with the Yugoslav side's acceptance of that invitation, have not been followed so far by a meeting of the negotiating teams.

17. During the reporting period, regional developments and a movement towards stabilization of the political situation, in particular in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, have given rise to the hope that a climate conducive to the resumption of negotiations is being created. In the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the change in the Federal Presidency was followed by elections to the Serbian Parliament, and the new leadership is consolidating its position. In Croatia, the Government sworn into office one year ago is by now well established. In the light of these developments and of my meetings with the Croatian President and the Yugoslav Foreign Minister, I trust that both sides will be able to resume the negotiations in the near future and find ways to bridge their differences on the disputed issue of Prevlaka. The steps envisaged in the package of options for confidence-building put forward in October 1999 by the Secretariat might be useful in this process. UNMOP remains ready to assist in the development of practical arrangements to give effect to any agreement, which the parties might reach.

18. Continued long-standing violations of the established security regime do not facilitate the establishment of mutual confidence. For this reason, the restrictions of movement imposed on UNMOP military observers on the Croatian side of the demilitarized zone, should be lifted. In the United Nations-controlled zone, the Montenegrin and Croatian police presence should be withdrawn and the violation of the security regime through continued operation of the checkpoints at Cape Kobila should be resolved.

19. Given the importance of ensuring that the situation on the ground remains calm and free of tension, and in order to maintain the conditions of stability which are essential to make meaningful progress towards a political settlement, I recommend that the mandate of UNMOP be extended for a further six months, until 15 July 2001. The Security Council may wish to request the parties to continue to report regularly on progress in their talks.

20. In conclusion, I should like to commend the Chief Military Observer and the men and women of UNMOP for their continuing dedication to maintaining peace and security in their area of responsibility.

Annex

Composition and strength of the military element of the United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka as at 29 December 2000

Country	*Number of military observers*
Argentina	1
Bangladesh	1
Belgium	1
Brazil	1
Canada	1
Czech Republic	1
Denmark	1
Egypt	1
Finland	1
Ghana	1
Indonesia	2
Ireland	1
Jordan	1
Kenya	1
Nepal	1
New Zealand	2
Nigeria	1
Norway	1
Pakistan	1
Poland	1
Portugal	1
Russian Federation	1
Sweden	1
Switzerland	1
Ukraine	1
Total	**27**

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